2: Adams E-4,5 (1970-1971) 1973 SR9 Carib SR9
(1932-1971) Barama River

II

HISTORY OF REGIONAL CONTACTS AND SUBSISTENCE RESOURCES

131 133 The headwaters of the Barama River are on the eastern slope of the low divide which marks the Venezuelan frontier. The Barama River, fed by many tributaries, meanders through the rain forest in a generally easterly direction for about 100 miles until it flows into the Waini River. The Great Falls at Towakaima divides the Barama River drainage basin into an upper and a lower section. This report concerns the upper section. Figure 1 is a map of the Barama River in relation to the rest of Guyana. Figure 2 is a more detailed map of the Barama River area.

132 [114] The physical environment of the Upper Barama area remains as Gillin describes it (1936:xii-xiii). Rainfall fluctuates from year to year, usually accumulating 110 to 120 inches annually (King 1968: 148). 137 [133] The drainage basin of the Upper Barama River supports a forest vegetation with a highest canopy of about 100 feet. The flora is mixed, and species occur in all possible combinations. The tall (35M) mora tree is perhaps the most impressive species (King 1968:22).

132 133 There is very little terrain that is not inundated by seasonal rain. Bishop reports no high ground suitable for an air strip between Towakaima and the mouth of the Baramita tributary (1941:6).

133 From Baramita mouth to Towakaima, the basin is a wide, flat plain with a gentle gradient (Bishop 1941:8). The Baramita flows

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 9]

2: Adams E-4,5 (1970-1971) 1973 SR9 Carib SR9
(1932-1971) Barama River

102
131
133

Figure 1. Guyana.

102
131
133
361

2: Adams E-4,5 (1970-1971) 1973 SR9 Carib SR9
(1932-1971) Barama River

Figure 2. The Barama River.

2: Adams E-4, 5 (1970-1971) 1973 SR9 Carib SR9
(1932-1971) Barama River

102
• 131
133
361

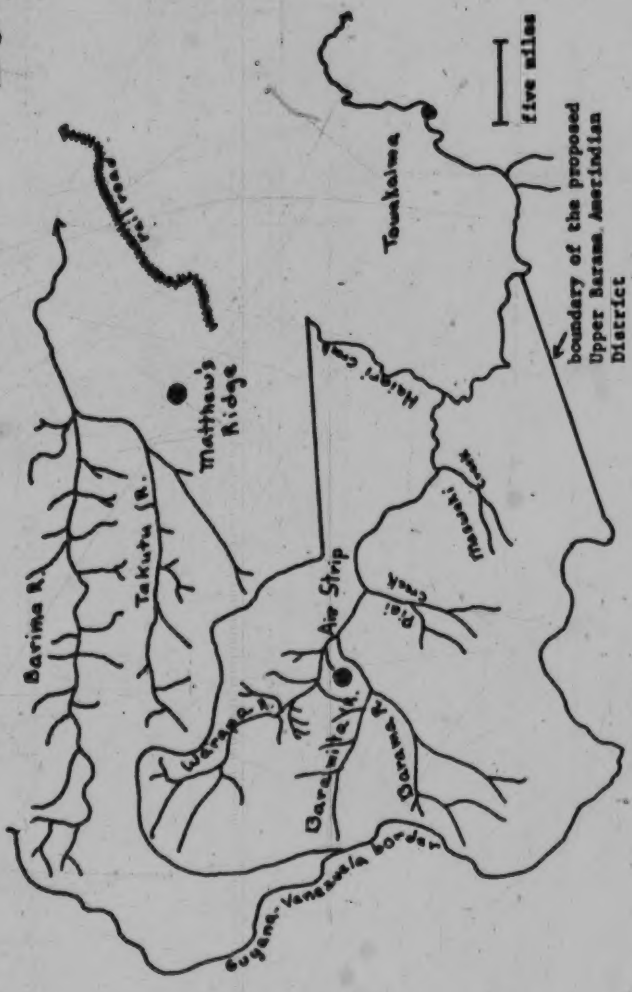

Figure 4. Proposed Amerindian District in the Upper Barama River Area.

121 182 *177 [131] [133] It would appear that studies of the relationships between population size and competition for local and external resources in the process of modernization, as in the case of the Upper Barama River Caribs, are appropriate in many similar situations throughout the world. In the Guyanas, which includes the area bounded by the Rio Negro, Amazon and Orinoco rivers, local Amerindian populations are subject to a variety of geographical environments and regional influences. The geographical areas include coastal, inland mountain-savannah, and interfluvial rain forest environments (Gillin 1948:800). Nevertheless, each area is not monolithic regarding the regional influences of national agencies, missionary groups, and entrepreneural agents which also generate adaptive strategies on the part of local populations.

*177 182 171 184 [101] For example, the interfluvial area in which the Upper Barama River Caribs are found is also inhabited by other Amerindian populations, including Caribs, with different adaptations. Along the border between Venezuela and Brazil, the Yanomamö (Chagnon 1968) adapt essentially to the rain forest and engage in warfare, characterized by its attrition, which contributes to the dispersion and limitation of this population. Although they rely on the European introduced plantain as the staple crop, they are largely unaffected by direct external influences. By contrast, the Trio (Rivière 1969), a Carib speaking group, have been recently nucleated around mission stations, a Roman Catholic mission in Brazil and two Protestant missions in Surinam. Carib groups outside the interfluvial area also add contrast to the adaptations of the Upper Barama River Caribs.

Boni
Emerillon SQ8
Rucuyen SR12
Carib SR9
Locono SR10

/11 cont./

3) The autochthonous Indians are represented on the Maroni-Basin by three groups:

—The Arawak and the Kalifia (Galibi) (about 500 persons) live downstream from Saint-Laurent; they live in symbiosis with the population of the city, whom they supply with fish and manioc. A century of contact with the Creole population has produced a certain alteration in their customs and traditional way of life, but the essentials of their tribal organization remain intact.

—The Oayana /Oyana/ or Roucouyennes /Rucuyen/ (about 250 persons) live on the Litani upstream ffom the Boni with whom they are in close relationship. They have not undergone any alteration in their race or their way of life.

—The Emerillon, who belong to the Tupi-Guarani group, form a small grouping on the way to extinction.

The Refugee Blacks. —Ethnic origin. No comprehensive anthropological study has as yet been undertaken on the Refugee Blacks. Not possessing the specialized knowledge necessary for tackling this study, we have left it entirely aside. Besides, we doubt that it would give important detailed information on the ethnic origin of the Refugee Blacks. Study of archive documents concerning the slave trade would certainly give more particulars; it is certain from now onwards that their origin is very diverse; the slave traders took on provisions principally on the coast of West Africa, but also in the Congo and in present-day Angola; the African words figuring in the present dialects come from the populations of these various regions. So it is not surprising to meet rather variable skull forms and statures among the Refugee Blacks.

The Refugee Blacks are in general of medium stature, that of the adult men being between 1 meter 60 and 1 meter 75; the average is a little below 1 meter 70.